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ENG 3405-002: Children's literature

Kilgore

Eastern Illinois University

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3405-002
Kilgore

English 3405-002
Children's Literature
Fall, 2004
TTh 11:00-12:15
CH 3170

Current Assignment

Read pp. 1-9 and 15-20 in **A**.
 Nina Bawden, "Emotional Realism in Books for Young People," A1081.

Last updated: 1/7/2005

NEXT HAND-IN DATE: First paper will be due Feb. 10.
 Advance conference or submission of a draft is recommended.

SYLLABUS

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Study Guides and Questions | Book Lists— Oral Reports | Writing Guidelines |
| Author Resource Page | Handout Library | Sample Student Writings |
| Dr. Murray's Young Adult Literature Web Site | | Dr. Kory's Children's Literature Web Site |

Course Description: This course will offer adult readers the chance to discover and rediscover some of the best-loved poems, tales, and novels for children while it challenges them to think with a certain sophistication about children, childhood, fantasy, and the role of literature. Our focus will be broadly historical, humanistic, and philosophical; pedagogical issues will sometimes make their way into our discussions but will not be our main concern.

Works studied will range from the simplest nursery rhymes to such longer stories as *Little House on the Prairie* and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Authors will include Grimms, Andersen, Carroll, Alcott, Kipling, Wilder, Twain, and Anonymous. The emphasis is decidedly on the classics, but in children's literature these are more accessible (and current!) than classics generally are; the quantity of reading assigned will be correspondingly high.

A writing-intensive course, 3405 will incorporate two medium-length papers, a midterm, a final, and an oral presentation. Quizzes may be given at any time to ensure that assigned reading is done carefully and on schedule.

INSTRUCTOR: John Kilgore. Office: 3331 Coleman Hall. Hours: Th 1-2, W 11-4. Also usually available right after class, and often here Mondays and Fridays. Except in emergencies, please do NOT expect to see me right before class, when I am usually making final preparations for discussion; just after is fine. Phone: (217) 581-6313 (office); (217) 345-7395 (home). E-mail: cfjdk@eiu.edu. During registration (February-March), it might be best to call first before dropping by the office, as I will be holding many advising conferences. Please feel free to call my home at reasonable hours. When leaving voice mail at the office, include date and time of call, and do not trust voice mail for urgent messages—try me at home instead. I prefer that you NOT visit me with questions just before class begins; just after is fine.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- Extensive assigned readings.
- Two papers of about 1,250-1,750 words each. (50%)
- Oral report (10%)
- Mid-term (10%)
- Final exam (20%)
- Attendance and participation (10%)
- Quizzes and Extra Credit Projects (up to 10% "bonus" to course average)

I reserve the right to depart somewhat from these percentages.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION. Will count approximately 10% of your grade in the course. From the second meeting on, I will be passing around an attendance sheet which you must sign. At the end of the term, I will assign a participation grade according to the following scale: 1 absence—A; 2 absences—B; 3 absences—C; 4 absences—D; 5 absences—F; more than 5—further, proportional declines in your course grade (your attendance grade becomes a negative number). I will raise the basic grade a bit if I think your contributions to class discussion have been especially good.

Note that you have one "free" absence. Use this if you have to, but otherwise keep it as insurance. I will listen sympathetically to excuses, **but I will not award attendance credit for any missed session until you have done make-up work.** An approved "excuse" entitles you to just one thing: the option of making up the missed day by doing a **significant** extra assignment. See me in my office to make arrangements for make-ups, and check with me later to make sure the work has been duly credited. (Hint: It's easier just to be here. Honest.) Note: it is your responsibility to find and sign the attendance sheet at each session, to arrange for make-ups if necessary, and to check to see that make-up work has been duly credited.

If a quiz is given on a day you miss, you will not be entitled to make it up.

ORAL REPORTS. Will be 5-10 minute speeches in which you discuss and report on some children's book that was important to you when you were younger. Avoid extensive plot-summary, but give us a vivid, clear impression of the book and share your enthusiasm for it. Relate your experience of this book to the course themes as appropriate and try to explain why the book made such an impression on you. Speak clearly, forcefully, and enthusiastically, resisting the compulsion, felt by many in the presence of a peer audience, to mumble, shrug, fidget, and speak only in vague generalities. Many of you will be making your living, two or three years hence, trying to engage a tough audience—school children—for hours every day. This is your chance to practice. By all means startle, provoke, and amuse us, but do not bore us.

You may want to use the audio-visual resources available in CH3170; if so, make arrangements with me to get checked out on the equipment.

PAPERS. Will come due on 2/10, and 4/17; see schedule below. These are to be analytical discussions of about 1250-1750 words (4-6 pages), thoughtfully posed, rigorously developed and defended, written with great care. Detailed writing guidelines are online; suggested topics will be forthcoming. You are welcome to develop your own topics rather than writing on the suggested ones, but be **sure** to check with me first. I welcome and recommend consultation of some kind in advance of the due dates. Have a few words with me after class, come by my office for a longer talk, phone me, or submit a partial draft by e-mail, sending it as an attached file in WORD format.

I am happy to respond to drafts as my time permits, in writing or in conference. Several caveats, however:

- Don't over-rely on my help. Writing is an inherently individualistic enterprise, best accomplished by ornery cusses who jealously guard their intellectual independence. The task can become very hard if you think too hard, too often, about what I want from you—not what

you have to say.

- Conferences are for brainstorming and general advice, not evaluation, which comes later, after you hand in the completed paper. Nothing I say in advance comments should be construed as a hint (much less a promise) of what grade seems likely. I assume that your goal is to improve, and will try to make suggestions that lead in that direction; but it is up to you to put them into effect and make them work—or to ignore them.
- My suggestions are always brilliant :-), but you really will have to ignore many of them. Writing is just like that; don't worry about it. When it comes time to grade the paper, I won't even remember what my advice was, and will respond to one thing only: how successful the discussion seems to be on its own terms.

Final drafts must be in hard copy and follow the usual conventions of manuscript form (see the Writing Guidelines on this). E-mail is not acceptable except in emergencies.

After the first paper is graded I will try to post some of the better efforts to this site (with the authors' permission, of course), and these may be useful models for the second essay.

EXAMS. Are scheduled for 3/8 and 5/4 (in finals week). Both the midterm and the final will contain a mix of objective questions and mini-essays designed to establish that you are familiar with **all** the reading and understand the concepts and issues that have been introduced in class discussion. Objective questions will ask you to identify authors, works, characters, terms, and quotations, and to provide other basic information from the works read. Essay questions will ask you to analyze concepts, interpret passages, and develop ideas in relation to works read on the syllabus. As in the papers, what will matter most is how well you defend your thesis or answer. The final will be comprehensive, but will emphasize works in the second half of the course much more than those that have already been covered on the midterm.

LATE WORK POLICY: I am willing to be somewhat flexible providing you have been in touch with me **before** the missed deadline. Otherwise late papers will be penalized one third grade (e.g., from "A" to "A-" or from "A-" to "B+") for each calendar day of lateness, weekends and holidays included. In addition, late work forfeits the right to receive "feedback," as it gives me no time to make marks or offer written commentary; I will simply read the paper and assign a grade.

Please be aware that the penalty for plagiarism or cheating—which I trust I will not have to impose—is automatic failure of the course. See me if you have any questions about this policy.

I will be more than happy to make reasonable accommodations for any student with a documented disability. Please contact me if you will need such an accommodation; or call the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services, 581-6583.

KEYS TO SUCCESS IN THIS CLASS:

- Attend faithfully.
- Consult the online "Current Assignments" board regularly, and make use of other online resources here.
- Be ready to think seriously and analytically about children's literature—not JUST to read and enjoy it, though you should do that, too.
- **Do ALL the reading, do it carefully, and do it EARLY.** The longer works come later in the term, just when you are busiest with papers in this and other courses. You need to make a head start now; remember that quizzes may be given at any time. Not all of the reading will be covered in class, but all or nearly all will be tested on exams.
- Make use of study guides and review questions in preparing for exams.
- Start your papers early and work hard on them, writing multiple drafts. Get feedback from me, from the Writing Center, or from your classmates before handing in the final version. Proofread repeatedly and then, when you're no longer seeing what's there, have a friend look at your penultimate draft. Be sure to consult the Writing Guidelines, and spend some time thinking about the comment sheet you will get back with your first essay. Do follow-up reading if

necessary to learn about basic writing conventions that may be giving you trouble.

- Be on the alert for special extra-credit projects, assigned to volunteers on short notice. These are fun and can give your grade average a boost.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Saltman, et al, eds., *The Riverside Anthology of Children's Literature* (A)
- Griffith and Frey, eds., *Classics of Children's literature* (C)
- Egoff, et al, eds., *Only Connect* (E)
- Scott O'Dell, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*
- Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie*
- J.D. Salinger, *Catcher in the Rye*
- Jack London, *Call of the Wild*

SCHEDULE

Note: Please complete the readings for each session **before** the class meets. As the course gets underway, try hard to **READ AHEAD** of the schedule. You will have a hard time keeping up at the end of the term if you do not make a head start on the longer readings. To keep track of changes, make a habit of bringing a hard copy of the syllabus to class with you, and check the online version every few days.

1) January 11, 13 Introduction

Read pp. 1-9 and 15-20 in A.

Nina Bawden, "Emotional Realism in Books for Young People," A1081.

2) January 18, 20 Nursery Rhymes and Nonsense

Nursery rhymes: read through pp. 15-63 in A, paying special attention to the following: "To market, to market," 22 "Humpty, Dumpty," 23, "Ding, dong, bell," 23, "Little Jack Horner," 23, "Hey, diddle, diddle," 24, "Little Boy Blue," 24, "Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater," 25, "Wee Willie Winkie," 26, "A diller, a dollar," 26, "Jack and Jill," 26, "Diddle diddle dumpling," 26, "Georgie, Porgie," 26, "Rub-a-dub-dub," 27, "There was a crooked man," 43, "This Little Pig," 28, "Goosey, goosey gander," 28, "There was an old woman," 30, "The House that Jack Built," 32, "Thirty days hath September," 39, "Step on a crack," 106, "Jelly in the Dish," 46, "How much wood," 52, "Peter Piper," 52.

Handout: Meter and Prosody.

Nonsense poems: Introduction, pp. 64-68 in A, plus the following poems: "Limericks," 71, "Knitted Things," 71, "Long Gone," 72, "One bright day," 72, "A horse and a flea and three blind mice," 75, "The Owl and the Pussy-Cat," 77, "Alexander Soames: His Poems," 79, "The Story of Augustus Who Would Not Have Any Soup," 80, "Jabberwocky," 81, "The Walrus and the Carpenter," 84.
Stevenson, "The Wind," A137; "My Shadow," A115.
Lynne, "Runes to Ward Off Sorrow" E110.

3) January 25, 27 Fairy Tales

Note: You will need to bring both anthologies to class while we are discussing fairy tales.

Continue with nonsense poems.

Read 245-252 in A.

Perrault, "Little Red Riding Hood," C10; plus oral version and Grimms' version (handout).

Grimms, "Hansel and Grethel," A255; "The Brave Little Tailor," C69; Jacobs, "Jack and the Beanstalk," C779.

4) February 1, 3 *Fairy Tales*

Perrault, "Cinderella," C17; Grimms, "Aschenputtel," C60.

Grimms, "Snow White," C41; "Rapunzel," C76; "The Sleeping Beauty," C87; "The Frog Prince," C46. Lang, "Beauty and the Beast," A284. Andersen, "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," C136.

5) February 8, 10 *Little Women*

Alcott, *Little Women*, C 186. Read Chapters 1-9 (to page 245); remainder optional.

First Paper Due on Thursday

6) February 15, 17 *Alice in Wonderland*

Alice in Wonderland: Read whole book in C, not just excerpt in A!

7) February 22, 24 *Little House on the Prairie*

8) March 1, 3 *Review and Catch-Up*

Review for midterm; possibly begin reports.

9) March 8, 10 *Reports*

Mid-Term Exam, Tuesday.

Reports in reverse alphabetical order, until everyone has gone.

Spring Break, March 14-18

10) March 22, 24 *Poetry*

Continue with reports.

Somewhat "older" poetry. From A (by page #): Alfred Noyes, *The Highwayman*, 109; Rose Fyleman, "Singing Time," 113; Nikki Giovanni, "A Poem for Carol," 120; Countee Cullen, "Incident," 121; Carl Sandburg, "Fog," 125; James Stephens, "The Snare," 132; Emily Dickinson, "A narrow fellow in the grass," 135; T.S. Eliot, "Macavity: The Mystery Cat," 145; Carmen Bernos De Gasztold, "The Prayer of the Little Pig," 146; William Blake, "The Tyger," 148; Russell Hoban, "Small, Smaller," 152; Robert Frost, "Nothing Gold Can Stay," 154; Robert Burns, "A Red, Red Rose," 155; Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken," 157; John Ciardi, "There Once Was an Owl," 158. Lamb, "The First Tooth," A122.

11) March 29, 31 *Adventures of Tom Sawyer, C389*

12) April 5, 7 *O'Dell, Island of the Blue Dolphins*

13) April 12, 17 *The Jungle Books*

Finish Twain, *ATS*.

Kipling, *The Jungle Books*, C1045. Read "Mowgli's Brothers," "Kaa's Hunting," "Red Dog," and "The Spring Running."

Second Paper Due on Thursday

14) April 19, 21 *Catcher in the Rye***15) April 26, 28 Review**

Review; Third Paper Due on Tuesday

Final Exam: Wednesday, May 4, 10:15-12:15

Some Links to Think About

(See Author Resource Page as Well)

[War Toy Collectible](#)

[Lewis Carroll Photographs of Children](#)

[Nonfiction Bibliography](#)

[Banned Books List](#)

[Discussion of Banned Books](#)

[Toddler Sounds](#)

[Scrapbook](#)

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